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EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES - MEASURES CONCERNING MEAT
AND MEAT PRODUCTS (HORMONES)

Communication from the Chairman of the Panel

The following communication, dated 28 November 1996 and addressed to the Dispute Settlement Body, is circulated in accordance with Article 12.9 of the DSU.

Article 12.8 of the DSU stipulates that the period in which the panel shall conduct its examination, from the date that the composition and terms of reference of the panel have been agreed upon until the date the final report is issued to the parties, shall, as a general rule, not exceed six months.

Article 12.9 of the DSU states that when the panel considers that it cannot issue its report within six months, it shall inform the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) in writing of the reasons for the delay together with an estimate of the period within which it will issue its report.

The Panel on "European Communities - Measures Concerning Meat and Meat Products (Hormones)" was established by the DSB on 20 May 1996 and the Parties agreed on its composition and terms of reference on 2 July 1996.

The Panel decided to seek the advice of four scientific experts, as foreseen in Article 13.2, first sentence of the DSU, and in Article 11.2, first sentence of the SPS Agreement. It appears that the procedures for consultation of the scientific experts, agreed by the Parties on an informal meeting held in 25 October 1996, will result in a delay of the Panel procedures. Therefore, the panel will not be able to issue its report within the six months' period.

The Panel expects to complete its work by no later than May 1997.